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Letter dated 8 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter reflecting the position of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the statement made by the representative of the United States of America during the Security Council meeting of 28 April 2008 on the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1770 (2007), regarding Iraq (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

08-33845 (E) 140508 150508

Annex to the letter dated 8 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The misleading accusations levelled against the Syrian Arab Republic by the representative of the United States of America, regarding the flow of weapons and fighters from Syria into Iraq, are entirely baseless. These accusations belong within the context of misleading American policies and allegations inconsistent with the truth, which are aimed at disowning responsibility for the failure of the American occupying forces to achieve peace and security in Iraq, and placing the blame elsewhere. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic categorically rejects such accusations, and stresses that it is concerned about security and stability in Iraq just as it is concerned about security and stability in Syria itself. In this regard, we would like to point out that responsibility for the protection and monitoring of borders is shared, and that as the occupying Power, the United States has a duty to preserve security and stability in Iraq, which continues to suffer as a result of American policies and futile military adventures both there and in the region as a whole.

For its part, the Syrian Arab Republic has continued to provide technical assistance to Iraq through unilateral measures to protect and secure their shared borders, despite the limited means at its disposal and the fact that such assistance has been rejected by certain parties including the United States. Syria has increased the number of border control posts to 557, deploying some 10,000 troops along the length of the shared border. Security patrols are sent out on a 24-hour basis to monitor the border and prevent infiltration into and out of Iraq. These measures have led to the detention and investigation of over 1,000 individuals, many of whom have been sent back to their countries of origin.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is progressing steadily in its cooperation with the Iraqi Government to secure the borders and prevent infiltration. That cooperation was praised by the Iraqi Foreign Minister in his press conference of 13 December 2007, and has been described by a United States military official as action of the most intense kind. According to the same American source, that cooperation has resulted in a notable decrease in the number of infiltrators.

The accusations made by the representative of the United States regarding the presence of Al-Qaida cells on Syrian territory are flimsy, trivial and groundless. Syria has on several occasions stressed that it condemns all forms of terrorism aimed at killing innocent people and destroying Iraqi institutions.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, which is host to around 1.5 million Iraqi refugees, would also like to reiterate its support for the peaceful political process and the realization of peace and stability in Iraq, in order to allow the refugees, who were forced by America's war and by violence and destruction to abandon their homes and possessions for neighbouring countries in search of security and stability, to return voluntarily to their country and in turn to take part in rebuilding what the war destroyed. This position was shared by all of the States that participated in the International Conference on Addressing the Humanitarian Needs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons inside Iraq and in Neighbouring Countries, which took place in Geneva on 17 and 18 April 2007.

We should like similarly to reiterate our commitment to the unity, security and stability of our neighbour Iraq, proceeding from the belief that the security and stability of Iraq are an extension of the security and stability of Syria. The two countries are closely intertwined strategically and geographically, a connection that is underscored by the ties of history, language and location, as well as by social, family and economic links. One tangible sign of Syria's concern for the security of Iraq specifically is the recent convening of two meetings of the Committee for Security Coordination and Cooperation of States neighbouring Iraq, at which an American delegation was present. The second meeting of the Committee, held in Damascus on 13 and 14 April 2008, stressed "the shared will to foster cooperation between Iraq and neighbouring States in order to strengthen security and stability in Iraq, to stress respect for the unity, sovereignty and independence of Iraq and to preserve its Arab and Islamic identity", given that these factors affect the security and stability of the region. The recommendations adopted by the meeting welcomed the "positive cooperation between Iraq and neighbouring States in combating terrorism and securing borders".

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic would again like to stress the need for an end to such misleading practices on the part of the United States, which result only in shifting responsibility for America's failure in Iraq, and for its attack on that country, onto other parties. The United States should likewise refrain from interfering in internal Iraqi affairs and hindering the political process, and enable Iraqis to complete the process of national reconciliation towards achieving security and stability, in order to ensure a life of dignity for Iraqis of all backgrounds and political affiliations, in an Iraq whose land and people are united and which exists harmoniously with its broader Arab and Islamic context.